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helpful to the students of the art of cross-examination to have placed before them some good illustrations of the methods of well-known cross-examiners as exhibited in actual practice in the cross-examination of important witnesses in famous trials." He, therefore, devotes the last five chapters of his book to the cross-examination of important witnesses as developed in several well-known cases. The situation under which the cross-examination was conducted in each case, is fully explained, and such leading facts in the case as the reader must understand in order to appreciate the questions involved, are given. Following the necessary introductory matter are copious extracts from the cross-examination as it actually was conducted upon the trial. Among the most interesting and instructive of these chapters is the one devoted to the cross-examination of Richard Pigott, by Sir Charles Russell before the Parnell Commission. The cross-examination of Russell Sage by Mr. Joseph H. Choate, in the Laidlaw-Sage case, with which the book closes, is given by Mr. Wellman as an example "of what the court of appeals of New York has decided to be an abuse of cross-examination, into which, through their zeal, even eminent counsel are sometimes led."

The author's long experience in a varied court practice gives to his suggestions special significance, while his method of statement challenges attention from the beginning of the book to the end. Mr. Wellman's work will undoubtedly appeal to the general reader as well as to the lawyer and the law student, for the book is essentially a popular description of an art that is, in a sense at least, dramatic in its nature, and it incidentally offers an opportunity for the study of controlling motives that one rarely meets with in the printed page. The law student will find the book not only highly entertaining, but valuable for the practical information that it contains, its excellent illustrations, and from the point of view of legal ethics. Its reading by the student, however, should follow systematic instruction in the law of evidence.

H. B. HUTCHINS

THE TORRENS SYSTEM. Its cost and complexity. A legal and practical treatise with references to the English and Victorian land transfer acts and to the Torrens acts of Illinois, California, Massachusetts, Oregon, Minnesota and Colorado. By William C. Niblack of the Chicago Bar, pages 205. Chicago, Callaghan & Company, 1903.

The sub-title of this volume indicates that the author regards the Torrens system as costly and complex, and in his preface he frankly states that his judgment may be affected by the fact that he has been for twelve years a stockholder and an officer and attorney of the Chicago Title and Trust Company, whose business, he admits, would be lessened and injured by the general adoption of the system. Following the discussion of some 160 pages is an appendix containing the text of the Illinois Torrens Law, and a form of one of the title insurance policies of the author's Company.

As many advocates of the Torrens system are mistaken, it would seem, in assuming it to be an absolutely perfect system, so, also, it appears, are its opponents mistaken in assuming that there are no just grounds for complaint against our present general recording system.

The author of this latest work on the subject says, for example, that "the criticisms [of the recording system] seem to be more against the system than against any results which come from the work under it" and that "no one urges that titles are insecure . . . or that mortgages turn out to be on defective titles" (p. 157). No one need insist very urgently that under our present system mortgages "turn out to be on defective titles" in view of such decisions as *Cameron v. Gray*, 202 Pa. St. 566; *Cook v. Walling*, 117 Ind. 9; *Donovan v. Ward*, 100 Mich. 601 and hundreds of others that might be cited, where mortgages taken in good faith, by those who had made a fair investigation of title under the recording system, have turned out to be of no value. The defects in our present system are so manifest as to make it impossible for the opponents of the Torrens system to subdue its advocates by claiming practical perfection for the recording system.

Nor is the inefficacy of the Torrens system proved by showing that there may be delays under *some* of the American Torrens acts (p. 156). If the business of registering titles is thrust upon the already overcrowded courts of general jurisdiction there must of necessity be delays. In order that a system of title registration may be practically efficient there should undoubtedly be provided a court of land registration giving attention to this business alone. There are in fact defects to be found in each Torrens act, but they are probably not irremediable—while some of the most glaring defects in our present system seem so.

In spite of the fact that the author does not profess to be entirely judicial in his method of treatment, he puts the arguments against the Torrens system on the whole fairly, and the work should be read by everyone who is desirous of getting all the light possible on a subject which is likely to be discussed for some time to come.

J. H. BREWSTER